

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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The Kyodan and CHRISTIAN VOCATION

The increasing concern of the church in Japan for the vocational lives of Christians is reflected in the increasing activity of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan Occupational Evangelism Committee. Reflecting the statement of the World Council of Churches report on "The Christian and his Vocation"; "The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices, and mines...", the Committee is taking the initiative in a wide range of activities from Hokkaido to Kyushu.

The Committee, meeting at Ito on January 17 for the first time since the General Assembly last fall, was able to evaluate its activities and map plans for the future. Here are some of its projects:

1) The primary task is educating the whole church in its responsibility to the laboring classes and concern in the occupations of its members. As a means to this end, starting last year the first Sunday in September has been designated Labor Sunday and is observed in local churches all over the country.

2) Three Christian labor centers are already operating in Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Fukushima ken. Each of these centers work with the hard pressed coal miners. Another social center for workers is now being built in Osaka which will include dormitories, a kindergarten, fellowship and study groups. This next year two more centers will be opened although the places have not yet been decided. This and other kinds of projects are carried on by the National Committee working in cooperation with and through the Occupational Evangelism Committee organized in each district (kyoku) of the Kyodan.

3) Local and national meetings among lay workers and pastors for study and mutual encouragement are using the theme this year, "The Battle for Faith in our Occupations". The annual nationwide conference this year will be June 14-16.

4) Pastors are being encouraged to attend government summer schools on labor problems in their localities.

- 5) Writing and translating literature on Christianity and Labor is being encouraged. A recent one page tract: "Christianity looks at the Japanese Labor Movement" (Kirisutokyo no Tachiba Kara Mita ihon no modōundo no Arikata) was printed and is available from the Kyodan Social Problem Study Commission. The committee is pushing the translation and publication of such materials as Dr. Oldham's
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| "Work in Modern Society" | (Kyodan Press) |
| "Biblical Doctrine of Work" | (NCC Lit. Comm.) |
| "Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society" | (NCC Lit. Comm.) |
- 6) A Model Labor Gospel School is going to be held one evening each week for six months starting this April in Hamamatsu City.
- 7) A Caravan team will work for a month this summer in the dormitories of girl textile workers in Shikoku, bringing to them the gospel, fellowship, and recreation.
- 8) White collar workers as well as laborers are included. For example, a current effort is to find Christian teachers in government schools and through them touch the lives of their fellow workers.
- 9) Four times a year a special issue of the Kirisutokyo Shimpō (the Kyodan Christian newspaper) is devoted to the special theme of Occupational Evangelism.

The Chairman of this National Committee is Rev. Isao Munakata. Rev. Henry Jones is the fraternal co-worker.

Thus, although it is true that the Japanese Christian Church is largely a middle and upper middle class church, there is a growing awareness that Christ came to save all men. There is also hope that this awareness will be translated into a living reality in Japan.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN JAPAN - their service and their difficulties

Mr. Tsuraki Yano, General Secretary of the National Christian Education Association in Japan, revealed some interesting facts in a recent article about the Protestant Christian schools in this country.

Recent figures show that whereas Protestant Christians compose only 0.27% of the population of this country, students in Protestant Christian schools compose 0.6% of the total student population. Thus the Christians of Japan through their schools are taking a larger share of the responsibility for educating young people than their numerical percentage would lead one to expect.

It is also interesting to note that while the percentage of male students is consistently higher than female students in government schools, this is not so much the case in Christian schools. The difference is more marked the higher one goes on the educational scale; so that at the college and university level the girls account for only 15.6% in the government schools, they make up 33.3% of the student body in Protestant schools. This is one tangible evidence of the great contribution that Christian schools have made by pioneering in the education of women in this country in the past two generations.

The percentage of students who are baptized Christians also varies according to the level of the school: in lower secondary schools 7-8%, upper secondary 10-15%, junior colleges 10-15%, and colleges and universities 5-7%. This shows that students are often not baptized until they reach the upper secondary or junior college level. The teachers who are Christians in these schools average about 40% of the staff although the actual proportion may vary from 30% to 100%. Mr. Iano warned, however, that the effectiveness of the Christian witness of a school cannot be judged by these figures alone. To get more than a superficial snap judgement, careful study of individual institutions, their problems and methods must be made.

One of the most crucial problems for the Christian schools is that of financing. Although the 5-15% of the budgets contributed by mission boards is a great encouragement to these schools, it hardly equals the 30-60% subsidy of the budgets of government institutions. Three tendencies result from this financial difficulty in the Christian schools:

- 1) The tuition fees are higher and in spite of efforts to provide scholarships, by and large the students in Christian schools are from families which are better off financially.
- 2) The salaries of teachers in Christian schools are generally lower. Consequently, there is a tendency for the best graduates of normal schools to go to Government institutions.
- 3) The temptation is to increase the ratio of students to teachers in order to gain the added tuition fees. This almost inevitably lowers the effectiveness of the teaching.

For all of these difficulties, however, these Christian institutions of education are carrying on a vital function in Japan. Religious education cannot be included in the curricula of government institutions under the present laws. Thus the Christian schools alone can give an education for democracy which is undergirded with the indispensable Christian foundation. Accepting the difficulties for what they are, yet recognizing the great role which these schools must play, we must rededicate ourselves so that God can work through us to accomplish His will in Japan.

Japan to Participate in SOUTH EAST ASIA CONFERENCE

On January 18th a planning committee was appointed to initiate discussion for, and to assure Japanese participation in the projected South East Asia Conference on Theological Education to be held in Changmai, Thailand February of 1956.

The invitation was issued by Dr. Rajah Manikam, S.E.Asia Secretary of the International Missionary Council, and Dr. C.S.Smith of the Nanking Board of Founders in S.E.Asia. Representatives from the Japan Christian Educational Association and several commissions of the N.C.C. appointed the planning committee and reviewed the issues to be discussed at the Conference.

The YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION Plans for the Year

Seventy five representatives from all over Japan attended a three day conference in Tokyo in the middle of January to report on work done during the past year and map plans for the year ahead.

The YWCA now has fifteen Associations located in the largest cities of Japan. There are six YWCA groups in smaller cities which are carrying on programs for young women although they do not have any buildings in which to center their activities. There are also Associations on many college and on a few high school campuses.

The annual Leadership Training Conference will be shifted from the summer to the spring this year to allow some leaders to attend the Quadrennial World YWCA Conference to be held in England this September.

Since this is the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the YWCA in Japan, a special commemoration service will be held on Nov. 3 on this year. This service will be followed by the Triennial National YWCA Convention.

The JAPAN COMMITTEE OF GERMAN MISSIONS establishes Tokyo Headquarters

On January 22 The Japan Committee of German Missions dedicated its new center of operations in Suginami ku, Tokyo. Since the war, under the leadership of Rev. Möller, several missionaries have been sent to Japan to work in such projects as the "Tokyo Midnight Mission" which has been working to save the street girls of this city, and the Seirei Hoyo Noen Hospital in Hamamatsu city. The six deaconesses in this latter institution are working not only to serve directly but also to train Japanese deaconesses.

The JCGM is seeking to become an associate member of the NCC in Japan. This will be voted on at the annual meeting of the NCC this coming March.

